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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [GM](#) [NO](#) [SW](#) [FI](#) [IT](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: GERMANY/AFGHANISTAN: NOVEMBER 26-27 MEETING OF  
ISAF RC-NORTH CHIEFS OF DEFENSE IN BERLIN

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR JEFF RATHKE. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) SUMMARY. At a November 26-27 conference in Berlin, ISAF RC-North Chiefs of Defense and representatives from SHAPE and JFC Brunssum discussed a wide range of issues, including the insurgent threat along the border with RC-West, the requirements for a larger RC-North QRF and support for next year's presidential election in Afghanistan. They also discussed the possible establishment of an ANA Engineer School in Mazar-e-Sharif, the filling of the remaining OMLT requirements in RC-North, and Germany's ideas for "Afghanizing" OMLTs. Germany continued to promote its Provincial Advisory Team concept, while everyone agreed on the need for PRTs to have robust civilian components to carry out the comprehensive approach. Finally, the CHODs discussed the conditions for transferring lead security responsibility to the Afghan national security forces and the decision on counternarcotics taken by NATO defense ministers at their October meeting in Budapest. END SUMMARY.

#### SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE

12. (SBU) The German Ministry of Defense hosted its second annual ISAF Regional Command North (RC-North) Chiefs of Defense (CHODs) conference November 26-27 in Berlin, led by German CHOD Gen. Wolfgang Schneiderhan. Most of the Allies and Partners who contribute forces to the north were represented by their CHODs or other senior military leaders. Attending from SHAPE was Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations (and former RC-North commander) Brigadier Gen. Dieter Dammjacob (Germany). Joint Force Command (JFC) Brunssum was represented on the first day by Assistant Chief of Staff (ACOS) for Operations Air Commodore Graham Stacey (UK) and on the second day by Deputy Commander Air Marshall Chris Moran (UK). OSD Foreign Affairs Specialist James Lowen as well as Embassy Defense Attache and Pol-Mil/External Affairs Chief attended as observers.

#### THREAT SITUATION IN RC-NORTH

13. (C) In its opening threat briefing, the German MOD conceded that despite the marked increase in security incidents in RC-North so far this year (170 compared to 130 during the same period last year), the region was relatively peaceful compared to RC-South and RC-East, which have suffered 3,800 and 3,500 incidents respectively. All total, less than 2% of all security incidents nationwide this year occurred in RC-North. The increase in violence in RC-North has been concentrated in just three provinces (Kunduz, Baghlan and Faryab), while the six other northern provinces

(Balkh, Badakhshan, Jowzjan, Takhar, Sar-e-Pol and Samangan) have seen violence this year remain at the same level or decrease.

#### INCORPORATING GORMACH DISTRICT INTO RC-NORTH

¶4. (C) To help address the deteriorating security situation in Faryab province, where Norway leads PRT Maimana, Norwegian CHOD Gen. Sverre Diesen pressed for a permanent ISAF presence in neighboring Gormach District in the RC-West province of Badghis. Diesen noted that insurgents are obviously aware of the boundary line between RC-West and RC-North and are using Gormach as a safe haven from which to launch attacks into Faryab. He called for greater flexibility in allowing Norwegian and other RC-North forces to conduct operations as needed in Gormach. He noted that Kandaks of the ANA 209th Corps, based in Mazar-e-Sharif, were already active in Gormach, so it only made sense for RC-North to be as well.

¶5. (C) JFC Brunssum Deputy Commander Air Marshall Moran strongly supported the Norwegian position, noting that terrain and distance made it difficult for RC-West to provide the required forces. He pointed out that the Spanish-led PRT in the Badghis capital of Qala-i-Naw was some 180 kilometers away from Gormach and that it took upwards of 18 hours to reach the district by vehicle during the winter. Moran also noted that the Afghans were already moving on a separate political track to incorporate Gormach into Faryab, therefore reinforcing the need for RC-North to consider this district as part of its area of operations.

¶6. (C) Italian Lt. Gen. Giuseppe Valotto, speaking for

RC-West, reacted somewhat defensively, noting that until recently, the center of gravity for RC-West operations was in the southern part of the region, but that now, RC-West had more capability to reinforce the Spanish in Badghis province.

Gen. Schneiderhan was very cautious. While expressing understanding for the Norwegian position, he expressed concern about trying to expand the RC-North area of responsibility to include Gormach, which he claimed would have to be approved by the German Bundestag. He said he was "not confident" that this could be achieved, noting that the Bundestag had just renewed the ISAF parliamentary mandate in October and would be reluctant to take up this controversial issue again during the run-up to parliamentary elections in September 2009. He also made the point that it would not be enough to send just ISAF forces into Gormach ) the ANA, UNAMA and the NGOs had to go in as well or none of the security improvements would be sustainable.

¶7. (SBU) Since the CHODs conference, this issue has hit the German press, with some unnamed parliamentarians reportedly expressing outrage over the "creeping" expansion of the German area of responsibility in Afghanistan. In response to media inquiries, German Defense Minister Jung has not ruled out the possibility of expanding RC-North to encompass Gormach District, but rather has simply committed to consult the Bundestag before agreeing to any changes.

#### FILLING THE REQUIREMENT FOR A LARGER QRF

¶8. (C) Germany used the conference to seek help in filling the requirement for a larger quick reaction force (QRF), as called for in the revised ISAF Combined Joint Statement of Requirements (CJSOR). The previous requirement was for a company-sized unit of approximately 200, which Germany has been filling alone since July, when it took over responsibility from Norway. The new requirement is for a battalion-size unit of approximately 600. The German MOD argued that given the large area to cover, it would be better to have a decentralized deployment of the QRF at two or three locations rather than basing the entire battalion at Mazar-e-Sharif. Toward that end, Schneiderhan said Germany could provide two QRF companies at Mazar and one at Kunduz, and asked that Norway provide a fourth company out of its PRT in Maimana.

¶9. (C) Norwegian CHOD Gen. Diesen tentatively agreed, saying that it would work with its Latvian partners on meeting the requirement. He argued, however, that if the QRF were deployed in a decentralized manner, it should be controlled by local commanders rather than by RC-North. While not challenging the plans for decentralized deployment, JFC Brunssum Deputy Commander Moran reminded the group that according to the CJSOR, the QRF battalion was supposed to be capable of being deployed "AOR wide" (i.e., throughout Afghanistan) as an integrated unit. There was no comment or discussion of Moran's intervention.

#### PROVIDING FORCES FOR ELECTION SUPPORT

¶10. (C) Germany highlighted the CJSOR requirement for RC-North's support of the upcoming presidential election, which calls for three infantry companies, rotary-wing transport (four helicopters), psychological and information operations teams, civil military teams (CIMIC) and medical support. Schneiderhan pressed the SHAPE and JFC Brunssum representatives to explain exactly what the ISAF mission would be in supporting the election so that RC-North could properly configure these additional forces.

¶11. (C) JFC Brunssum Deputy Commander Moran explained that ISAF forces would mostly likely be asked to provide outer perimeter security and in extremis support, but conceded that the date of the election was still up in the air and that there had still been no formal request for support from the Afghan government. He noted that while COMISAF favored the election in September/October after Ramadan, as previously arranged, Afghan political considerations could dictate that it take place as early as May. He also expressed a preference for having the election conducted over a period of several days in different regions, arguing that ISAF probably did not have enough forces to provide security throughout the country for a one-day election.

¶12. (C) There was general agreement to meet the requirement for additional combat forces in a decentralized fashion, with each lead nation taking responsibility for reinforcing its own PRT with a few additional platoons of infantry. Schneiderhan confirmed that Germany was prepared to provide the required psyops, information and CIMIC teams, as well as a deployable Role 2 medical facility. He also confirmed that Germany was hoping to deploy two additional CH-53 helicopters in time to support the elections, but that this depended on how quickly they could be up-armored. Separately, Director of the German Joint Commitment Staff Maj. Gen. Erhard Buehler indicated that the two additional helicopters would probably not be withdrawn after the elections, but remain deployed in Afghanistan indefinitely. (Comment: Deployment of these two additional helicopters would increase the number of uparmored German CH-53s in Afghanistan to 9. Germany has some 80 CH-53s in its inventory, but only 20 are currently up-armored and combat-deployable. Germany is currently having 8 additional CH-53s up-armored, from which the MOD will draw in supporting the election support deployment. End Comment.)

#### GIVING OMLTS AN AFGHAN FACE?

¶13. (C) Schneiderhan announced that Germany planned to do a food-for-thought paper on evolution of the OMLT concept, proposing, among other things, to give it more of an "Afghan face." Germany thought it was time to think about how to integrate Afghan trainers into the OMLTs, with the goal of having them gradually take over the training and mentoring of Kandaks, thereby reducing the need for international forces to do this work. Schneiderhan argued that this would become especially important as the ANA was expanded to meet the new end-state goal of 122,000 and the demand for OMLTs increased.

¶14. (C) While expressing themselves open to any new ideas Germany might want to bring forward, both SHAPE and JFC Brunssum were clearly skeptical about the Afghanization of OMLTs. JFC Brunssum ACOS for Operations Air Commodore Stacey pointed out that OMLTs not only provide training, but also provide liaison with ISAF and are responsible for calling in

close air support and medical evacuation. For legal and other reasons, this was not a function that could be turned over solely to the Afghans. He and SHAPE ACOS Brigadier Gen. Dammjacob also pointed out that experienced and highly qualified ANA officers were in short supply and using them as trainers/mentors would mean that they would not be available to lead ANA Kandaks, thus diminishing the combat capability that the training programs were designed to engender. Both expressed doubt that this would be a good trade-off.

#### FILLING OMLT REQUIREMENTS IN RC-NORTH

¶15. (C) Germany announced at the start of the conference that only two U.S. ETTs in the ANA 209th Corps in RC-North still had no identified NATO OMLT replacements: 1) the Combat Service Support (CSS) Kandak for the 1st Brigade and 2) the Garrison Kandak for the forthcoming 2nd Brigade. When Sweden announced at the conference that it was willing to provide an OMLT for an infantry Kandak, Germany agreed to let Sweden take over the infantry battalion it is currently mentoring (2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade) and to assume responsibility for the 1st Brigade CSS Kandak instead. Finland announced it was willing to team up with Germans in mentoring this unit. Germany also agreed to assume responsibility for the 2nd Brigade Garrison Kandak. Croatia confirmed that it was taking over the Combat Support (CS) Battalion of the 1st Brigade from a U.S. ETT in March 2009, but said it would be doing so in partnership with the U.S. Minnesota National Guard.

¶16. (C) The Germans understand that the U.S. wants to retain its ETT in the 209th Corps Commando Kandak based in Mazar-e-Sharif. By Germany's reckoning, then, there are no more U.S. ETTs to be replaced in RC-North at the current time, although the MOD is aware that the stand-up of the 3rd Brigade in 2010 and beyond, as part of the ANA expansion, will create additional OMLT requirements. As result of the agreements reached at the conference, the OMLT picture in RC-North is as follows:

209th Corps: Germany/Norway/Sweden/Croatia Finland

1st Brigade: Norway/Germany/Sweden/Croatia/Finland/Macedonia

-- 1st Kandak (Battalion): U.S., transfer to Norway in January 2009

-- 2nd: Germany, transfer to Sweden in 2009

-- 3rd: Croatia

-- CS: U.S., transfer to Croatia/U.S. in March 2009

-- CSS: U.S., transfer to Germany/Finland in 2009

-- Garrison: Croatia in February 2009

2nd Brigade: Germany/Hungary/Macedonia

-- 1st: Germany (entered initial training October 2008)

-- 2nd: Belgium (start January 2009)

-- 3rd: Hungary (start February 2009)

-- CS: Germany (start March 2009)

-- CSS: Germany (start January 2009)

-- Garrison: U.S., transfer to Germany in 2009

#### PROPOSED ANA ENGINEER SCHOOL

¶17. (C) Germany briefed its proposal to establish an ANA Engineer School in Mazar-e-Sharif consisting of some 30 mentors and costing some 18 million Euros over five years. Germany originally had intended to set up an ANA Infantry School in Mazar, but had given up that idea after learning that such a school was already planned to be established in Lashkar Gah in Helmand Province. While nations generally supported the idea of an Engineer School and volunteered to provide trainers and equipment, no one stepped forward to help with funding. Schneiderhan said flatly that Germany could not afford to cover all the costs of the school itself and that without other financial contributions, the proposal was "a non-flier." He suggested that RC-North nations take up this issue again in the new year. (Comment: The MOD's balking at spending 18 million Euros over five years for the Engineer School does not bode well for our pending request

that Germany spend an additional 100 million Euros per year beginning in 2010 to support ANA expansion. End Comment.)

#### PROVINCIAL ADVISORY TEAMS AND FUTURE OF THE PRT CONCEPT

¶18. (C) Germany continued to promote its idea of setting up a Provincial Advisory Team (PAT) in every province that does not yet have a PRT. It also continued to advocate in favor

of eventually establishing a PRT in all 34 provinces of the country. Germany noted that it was considerably expanding its PAT in Takhar Province to some 45 soldiers and civilians, up from the original team of 25, which was military only. While Swedish CHOD Gen. Syren Hakan remained reluctant to accept the PAT moniker for Sweden's three provincial offices in Jawzjan, Sar-e-Pol and Samangan, he noted that Sweden and its partners were following Germany's line and adding a full-time civilian capacity to each.

¶19. (C) Norwegian CHOD Gen. Diesen noted that because of the lack of coherence at the strategic level in Afghanistan, PRTs must be the primary instruments of the comprehensive approach, which requires more civilian capability. He conceded that this view ran at variance to Norway's long-standing ideological preference to funnel all development and civilian assistance through the national government and through NGOs at the national level. He also regretted the fact that most civilian agencies in the governments of ISAF contributing nations did not have much expeditionary capability.

¶20. (C) Finnish Chief of Defense Command Lt. Gen. Ari Puheloinen took a similar line, raising the idea of eventually transforming its military observation teams (MOTs) at PRT Maimana into CIMIC teams that can more readily carry out a comprehensive approach. JFC Brunssum Deputy Commander Moran revealed that Brunssum was just about to release a paper on the "PRT life cycle," which would propose a possible evolution of PRTs in accordance with the five-year Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and PRT end-state.

#### TRANSFER OF LEAD SECURITY RESPONSIBILITY

¶21. (C) The German MOD raised concerns that ISAF had been too passive up to now on the issue of transferring lead security responsibility (TLSR) to the Afghan National Security Forces.

It proposed ISAF taking a more "directive approach" in setting criteria and pre-conditions to ensure that the TLSR process unfolded in a transparent and predictable fashion

that respected the equities of ISAF contributing nations. Swedish CHOD Gen. Hakan agreed, noting that there were many rumors that Balkh province, the location of PRT Mazar-e-Sharif and RC-North HQ, was a leading TLSR candidate after Kabul. It was important to understand what the criteria and timelines would be for this process and what the role of ISAF would be after it was over. Referring to President Karzai's announcement on TLSR for Kabul, SHAPE DCOS for Operations Brigadier Gen. Dammjacob agreed that if ISAF did not "lean forward" on TLSR, the Afghans would make decisions on their own, which might not necessarily accord with ISAF's point of view.

¶22. (C) JFC Brunssum Deputy Commander Moran conceded that there was a need to have greater transparency and understanding of what TLSR was all about. He clarified that Phase 4 (transition) of the ISAF operation would only be declared after a number of provinces had been successfully transferred to the ANSF and a "tipping point" had been reached. In conclusion, Schneiderhan wondered if the paper currently before the NATO Military Committee on the TLSR issue was really ripe for consideration. He noted that once it was delivered to the political level, the military would lose control of it. He suggested postponing any action on it until after new CENTCOM Commander General Patreus completed his Joint Strategic Review of CENTCOM's area of operation in February 2009.



FOLLOW-UP TO BUDAPEST DECISION ON CN

¶23. (C) German Joint Commitment Staff Director Maj. Gen. Buehler noted that although NATO Defense Ministers had been pressed to take an urgent decision at their informal Budapest meeting in October to authorize COMISAF to conduct CN interdiction operations against drug laboratories and traffickers linked to the insurgency, no such operations had yet been conducted. He wondered why this was the case and what ISAF would be able to report to Defense Ministers at their next week in Krakow in February.

¶24. (C) JFC Brunssum Deputy Commander Moran confirmed that, in fact, no operations under COMISAF,s enhanced CN authority had been conducted, largely because of the need for countries who plan to participate in such operations, such as the U.S., to settle remaining outstanding legal and procedural issues and to refine the rules of engagement. He acknowledged that because of the delay, ISAF had probably missed the opportunity to interdict the initial production and processing of this past season,s poppy crop. As a result, he said it would be important to "manage expectations" about what can be achieved by the time of the Krakow meeting.  
TIMKEN JR